



## A final farewell to Carnival 53

Last night, the streets of Oranjestad were once again filled with the sound of music and dancing island residents that joined the march led by Rey Momo to the field at the west end of town. According to folklore, Rey Momo is a pagan figure, the son of nightmares and the dark of night. He presides over the feast of lunatics, and is the master of cruel satire, sarcasm, and merciless irony. He is also the protector of those who give in to a life of excesses and festivities. In today's terms, Rey Momo is the king of party animals, and Carnival is the ultimate party!

The traditional burning of Rey Momo signals the full and final end of the Carnival events, and takes place exactly at midnight, the commencement of Ash Wednesday and Lent. All the Carnival Queens and their runners-up and the various Princes and Panchos, who preside over Carnival, accompanied Rey Momo on the journey to his immolation. Hundreds joined the parade, enjoying one final dance and chance to party before the solemn days of "Quarisma," as Lent is known in this region.

Tecla Kelly, the president of SAC, (Stichting Arubaanse Carnaval) the organization that regulates and organizes the Carnival events, thanked the public and participants on behalf of Rey Momo for making this year's Carnival so beautiful and successful.

Brief showers just before midnight did not dampen the spirits of the celebrants of another wonderful Carnival gone by, nor did they douse the flames that consumed the effigy of Rey Momo. There was one last group hug for Tecla and the SAC staff for all their hard work, and the wish for a good year until Carnival 54 rises from the ashes when at the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 2007 Tecla bangs down her gavel and officially declares Carnival 54 has begun!